

MOLOCH THE KING

NOTE I

Mass modes of strengthening the king
acres and prolonging his life belonged
perp to
e-
trate the nutritive rather than to the
d vicarious type of sacrifice, from
whe which it will follow that they were
n a magical rather than religious in
king character.
of
Uga

nda The same thing may perhaps
was be said of the wholesale massacres
ill. which used to be perpetrated
At when a king of Uganda was ill.

At these times the priests informed
the royal patient that persons
marked by a certain physical
peculiarity, such as a cast of the
eye,

a particular gait,^s or a distinctive
colouring, must be put to death.
Accordingly the king sent out his
catchpoles, who waylaid such
persons in the roads and dragged
them to the royal enclosure,
where

they were kept until the tale of
victims prescribed by the priest
was

Yet complete. Before they were led
the away to one of the eight places of
saci execution,⁵ which were regularly
fices appointed for this purpose in
of different

child Molo parts of the kingdom, the victims
ren ch may had to drink medicated beer with
to may be the king out of a special pot, in
other order that he might have power
wise expla over their ghosts, lest they should
ined. afterwards come back to torment
him. They were killed,
sometimes by being speared to
death,

sometimes by being hacked to
pieces, sometimes by being
burned

alive. Contrary to the usual
custom of the Baganda, the
bodies, or
what remained of the bodies, of
these unfortunates were always
left

unburied on the place of
execution.¹ In what way
precisely the
sick king was supposed to benefit
by these massacres of his subjects
does not appear, but we may
surmise that somehow the
victims

wer possible that in Israel also the
e sacrifices of children
beli to Moloch were in like manner
eve intended to prolong the life of the
d to human king (imlecK) either by
give serving as substitutes for him or
thei by

r recruiting his failing energies
live with their vigorous young life.
s But it
for is equally possible, and perhaps
him more probable, that the sacrifice
or of the first-born children was
to only a particular application of
him the

. ancient law which devoted to the
T deity the first-born of every womb,
hus whether of cattle or of human
it is beings.²

¹ From information
furnished by my
friend the Rev. J.
Roscoe. Compare

his book. The
Baganda, pp. 331
sqq*

² See The Dying
God, pp. 166 sqq.